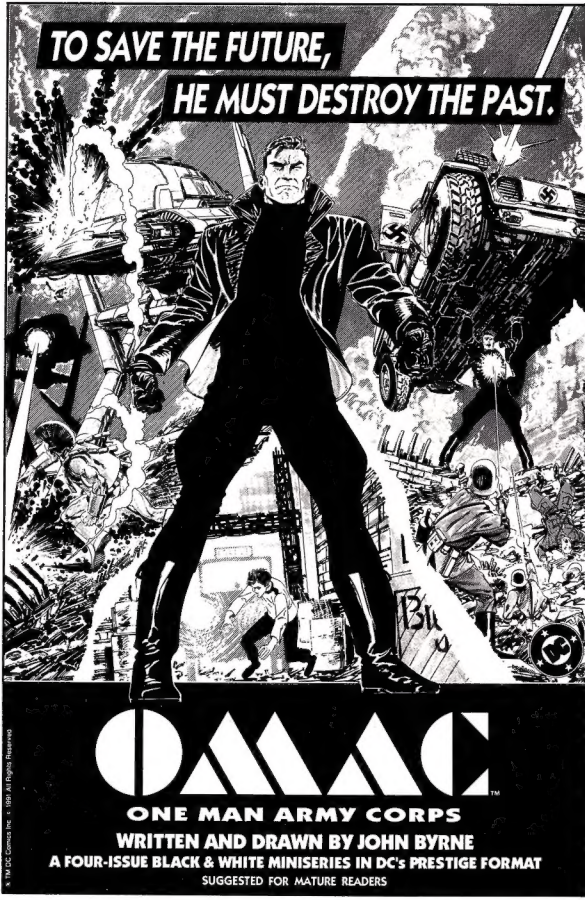
BATMAN
LEGENDS OF THE
DARK KNIGHT
NO 18 MAY 91
150 CAN 185
VENOM
PART THREE OF FIVE
DENNIS O'NEIL ♦ TREVOR VON EEDEN
RUSSELL BRAUN ♦ JOSÉ LUIS GARCIA-LOPÉZ


TO SAVE THE FUTURE,
HE MUST DESTROY THE PAST.
OMAC™
ONE MAN ARMY CORPS
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY JOHN BYRNE
A FOUR-ISSUE BLACK & WHITE MINISERIES IN DC's PRESTIGE FORMAT
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
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HE STANDS NUMB, TRYING TO COMPREHEND WHAT HE JUST HEARD.
HOW WON'T MIND HELPING US WITH A PROBLEM WE'VE RUN INTO--
SURE HE'LL HELP.
DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS?
STUPID QUESTION. OF COURSE HE RECOGNIZES JIM-- JAMES GORDON, BEST COP ON THE FORCE AND THE NEAREST THING HE HAS TO A FRIEND.
KILL HIM.
UNDERSTAND?
NO SWEAT.
I'LL KILL HIM. I'LL BRING YOU HIS HEAD ON A PLATTER. WITH AN APPLE IN HIS MOUTH.
COULD THESE BE HIS WORDS? COULD HE MEAN THEM?

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Jnx_Scanz_HoCsA !!!

VENOM: PART THREE

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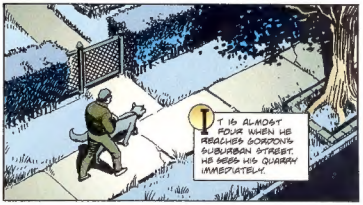
OH, I DON'T KNOW, GENERAL. I THINK THE APPLE WOULD BE A NICE TOUCH.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT BEFORE MORNING.
NOW.. COULD I HAVE WHAT I CAME FOR?
HE HEARS THE WHINE IN HIS VOICE. AND HE DESPISES IT.

I DON'T HAVE ANY READY PERHAPS WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH GORDON--
BEFORE YOU LEAVE.. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE NOT ASKING YOU TO COMMIT MURDER?
YOU'RE NOT?

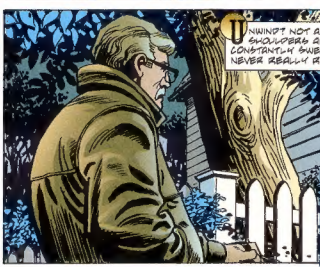
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE.
THE CITY IS GOING TO HELL--ALONG WITH THE ENTIRE CIVILIZATION. GORDON IS PART OF THE PROBLEM. HE LOOKS TOUGH--BUT INSIDE HE'S MUSH.
WE CAN'T AFFORD WEAKLINGS IN HIS POSITION.
HE'D SAID VIRTUALLY THE SAME THING TO ALFRED

WHAT'S WORSE, HE'S IMPEDING MY RESEARCH. THE FOOL IS BLOCKING PROGRESS. HE'S STANDING IN THE WAY OF MAN'S EVOLUTION TO SUPERMAN.

I'LL BE BACK.


IT IS ALMOST FOUR WHEN HE REACHES GORDON'S SUBURBAN STREET. HE SEES HIS QUARRY IMMEDIATELY.

BATMAN REALIZES THAT GORDON MUST HAVE WORKED LATE AT HEADQUARTERS. HE'S WALKING THE DOG TO UNWIND.


UNWIND? NOT A CHANCE. HE'S STIFF. HIS SHOULDERS ARE TENSE. HIS EYES CONSTANTLY SWEEP THE STREET. HE CAN NEVER REALLY RELAX.

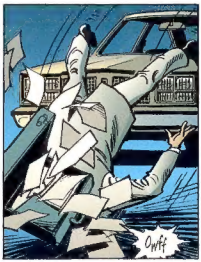
BUT ORDINARY KILLERS AREN'T TRAINED BY KIRIGI, PULCAR, TENNETMO AND THE REST.
ORDINARY KILLERS HAVEN'T SPENT A LIFETIME PRACTICING WHAT BATMAN IS ABOUT TO DO--

HE'S ALL COP-ALWAYS EXPECTING TROUBLE. IF BATMAN WERE AN ORDINARY KILLER, GORDON WOULD BE AWARE OF HIM.

I'VE COME TO KILL YOU.
WHA--
I MEAN... I'VE BEEN SENT TO KILL YOU. AND WHEN I DON'T, THEY'LL SEND SOMEONE ELSE.
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SCIENTIST... RANDOLPH PORTER. AND--
--TIMOTHY SLAYCROFT. GENERAL OF SOME KIND. YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING TO THEM. I DON'T KNOW. ANYWAY, THEY'RE AFTER YOU.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES. NO.
UNTIL THIS MOMENT, HE THOUGHT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH IT. BUT SOMETHING IS WRITHING IN HIS CHEST AND SOMETHING ELSE IS CLAWING AT HIS EYES.
HE DIDN'T KNOW HE'D DECIDED UNTIL HE SPOKE--
I'M GOING AFTER THEM NOW. MAYBE I'LL GET THEM. IF NOT, YOU HIT THEM IN THE MORNING.
YOU HEAR ME?

--CONTACT IN ST. LOUIS SAYS GORDON KNOWS THE MEN WE LOST LAST NIGHT SERVED UNDER ME.
AND IF OUR MASKED FRIEND SUCCEEDS IN ELIMINATING HIM?
BY NOW, GORDON WILL HAVE INFORMED OTHERS. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THEY CONNECT US WITH THE CASUALTIES.
THEN WE HAD BETTER WARN THE PLANE LEAVES IN AN HOUR.
YOU'RE GOING NOWHERE.
EXCEPT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WHERE YOU WILL MAKE A FULL CONFESSION TO CAPTAIN JAMES GORDON OR DISTRICT ATTORNEY HARVEY DENT.
OH, I REALLY DON'T THINK THAT FITS IN WITH OUR PLANS.
OUT OF THE WAY.
NO.
I SAID OUT--
THWIP!
THWIP!

FATHER--!


Oof!

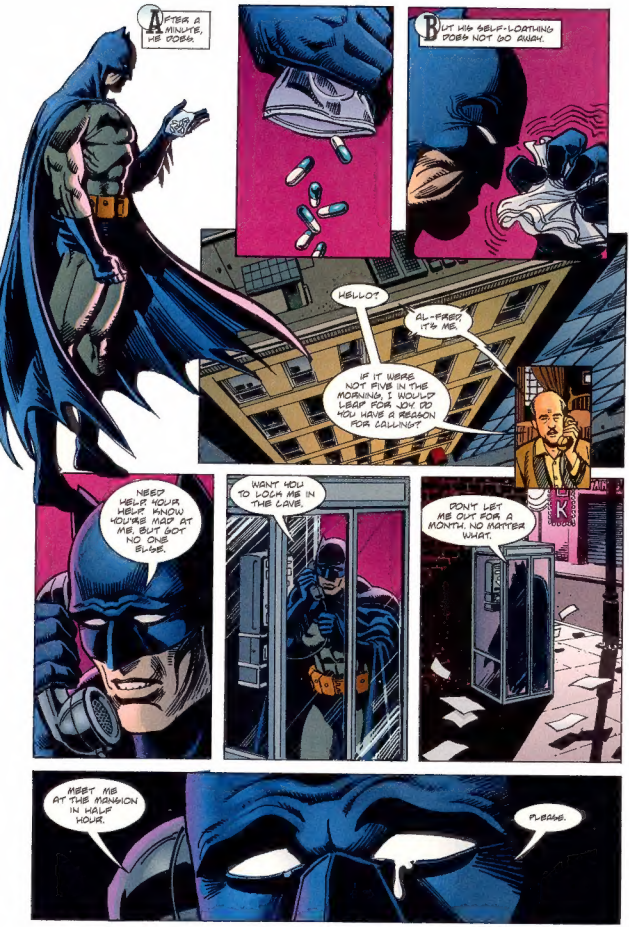
YOU ARE GOING DOWNTOWN!

A-AM I? I MIGHT BE ABLE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND WITH--

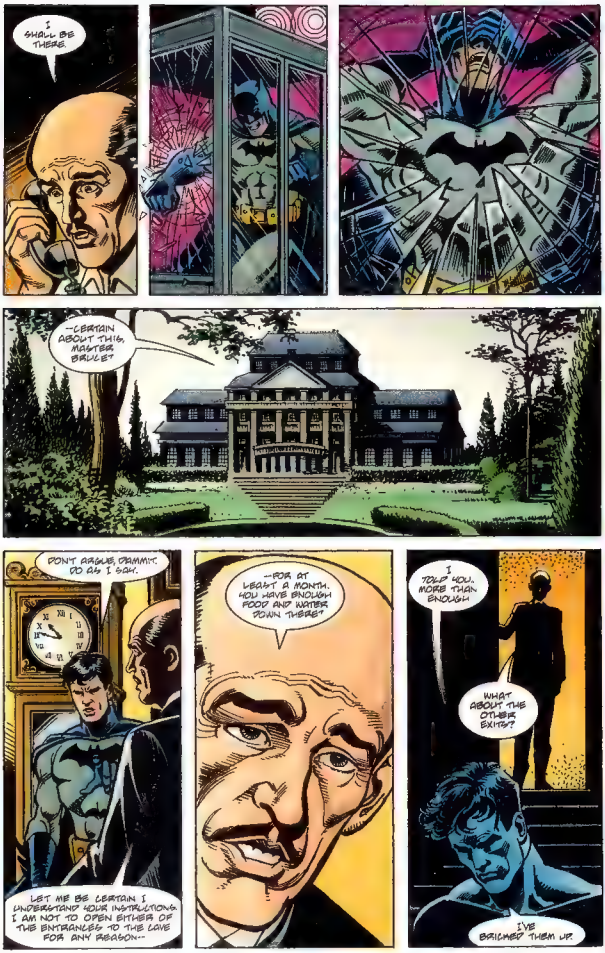
--THESE! RECOGNIZE THEM?

HIGH-THEM!

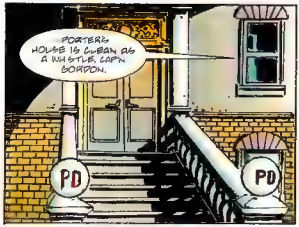
LET'S MOVE OUT.
NOT YET. SEINGAL. THE RESEARCH NOTES FROM MY BRIEFCASE..
..THEY'RE IMPORTANT--
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO SEARCH FOR THEM. THE PLANE--
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT.
GOT 'EM.
LAUGHTER SHRIEKS FROM HIM.
AND SUDDENLY STOPS.
HE STRUGGLES TO RECOGNIZE THE FEELING THAT SEEMS TO BE SQUEEZING THE LIFE FROM HIM.

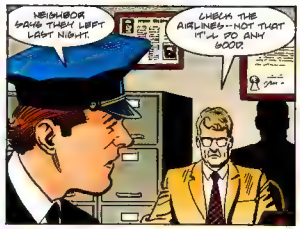

AFTER A MINUTE, HE DOES.
BUT HIS SELF-LOATHING DOES NOT GO AWAY.
HELLO?
AL-FRED, IT'S ME.
IF IT WERE NOT FIVE IN THE MORNING, I WOULD LEAP FOR JOY. DO YOU HAVE A REASON FOR CALLING?
NEED HELP. YOUR HELP. KNOW YOU'RE MAD AT ME. BUT BOY NO ONE ELSE.
WANT YOU TO LOCK ME IN THE CAVE.
DON'T LET ME OUT FOR A MONTH. NO MATTER WHAT.
MEET ME AT THE MANNION IN HALF HOUR.
PLEASE.

ROCKETEER
JUNE 21


I SHALL BE THERE.
--CERTAIN ABOUT THIS, MASTER BRUCE?
DON'T ARGUE, DAMMIT. DO AS I SAY.
--FOR AT LEAST A MONTH. YOU HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND WATER DOWN THERE?
I TOLD YOU. MORE THAN ENOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER EXITS?
LET ME BE CERTAIN I UNDERSTAND YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. I AM NOT TO OPEN EITHER OF THE ENTRANCES TO THE CAVE FOR ANY REASON--
I'VE BARRICADED THEM UP.

ISN'T THERE ANOTHER WAY? SOMEONE WHO COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE--A PHYSICIAN, PERHAPS?
NO, I SUPPOSE NOT. YOU ARE--
--WHO YOU ARE.
--ARE WE GOING, FATHER?
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE TO YOU?
I'D JUST LIKE TO KNOW.
TO AN ISLAND CALLED SANTA PAULA. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE QUITE COOPERATIVE--FOR A PRICE. WE'LL PROBABLY SPEND A COUPLE OF WEEKS--
THEN WE SHALL RETURN TO GOTHAM AND CONCLUDE OUR BUSINESS THERE.


PORTER, HOUSE IS CUBAN AS A WHISTLE, CAPT. GORDON.
PD
PD


NEIGHBOR SAWS THEY LEFT LAST NIGHT.
CHECK THE AIRLINES--NOT THAT IT'LL DO ANY GOOD.

--CERTAIN YOU WANT TO DO THIS, GENERAL BLANCROFT? THE RISKS ARE VERY CONSIDERABLE

NO. THE RISKS ARE NEGLIGIBLE IF HE SURVIVES, HE WON'T BE QUITE AS WORTHLESS AS HE IS NOW. IF HE DOESN'T, NO LOSS
IN THAT CASE WE MAY AS WELL GET YOUNG MASTER TIMOTHY STARTED WHERE I'D HIT
OUT OF HOMEWARD

--TU ERES NORTEAMERICANO..
I'M SORRY, I DON'T SPEAK SPANISH

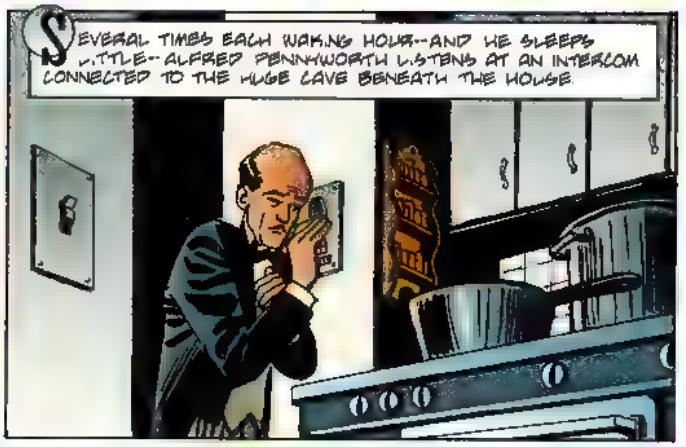
NO, I AM SORRY I SAW YOU ARE FROM NORTH? YOU LIVE IN THE BIG HOUSE?
YES. WITH MY FATHER AND HIS FRIEND PROFESSOR PORTER. MY FATHER IS A GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES. A RETIRED GENERAL, WITH HONORS.

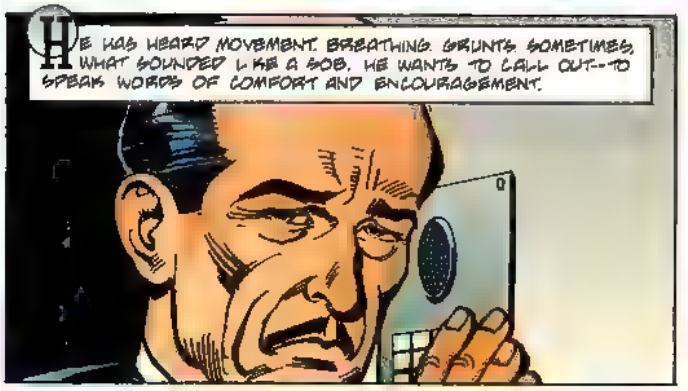
PROFESSOR PORTER IS A FAMOUS SCIENTIST. BUT NOT AS FAMOUS AS MY FATHER. MY FATHER WAS A WAR HERO. HE HAS A WHOLE LOT OF MEDALS AND A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF.

WHAT ARE YOU CALLED?
TIMOTHY SLAWCROFT JUNIOR. THE SAME NAME AS MY FATHER--EXCEPT FOR THE JUNIOR PART
I AM LONGUELA

WELL, I GOTTA GO.
IF YOU ARE HERE TOMORROW, WE CAN TALK AGAIN?
WELL, SURE

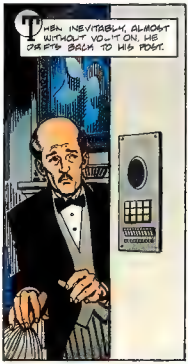
IT HAS BEEN TEN DAYS

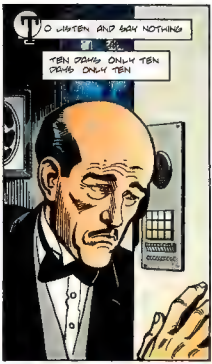

SEVERAL TIMES EACH WAKING HOUR--AND HE SLEEPS LITTLE--ALFRED PENNYWORTH LISTENS AT AN INTERCOM CONNECTED TO THE HUGE CAVE BENEATH THE HOUSE.

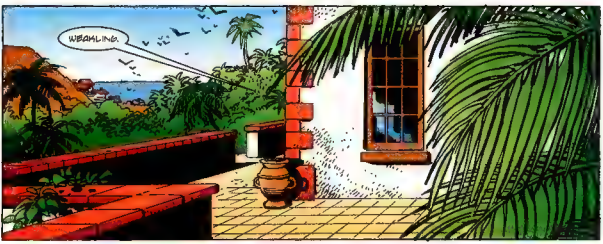

HE HAS HEARD MOVEMENT. BREATHING. GRUNTS SOMETIMES, WHAT SOUNDED LIKE A SOB. HE WANTS TO CALL OUT--TO SPEAK WORDS OF COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

BUT HE DOES NOT

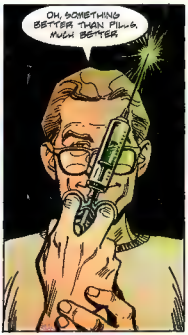
He goes about his household chores for whole minutes at a time.


Then inevitably, almost without volition, he drifts back to his post.

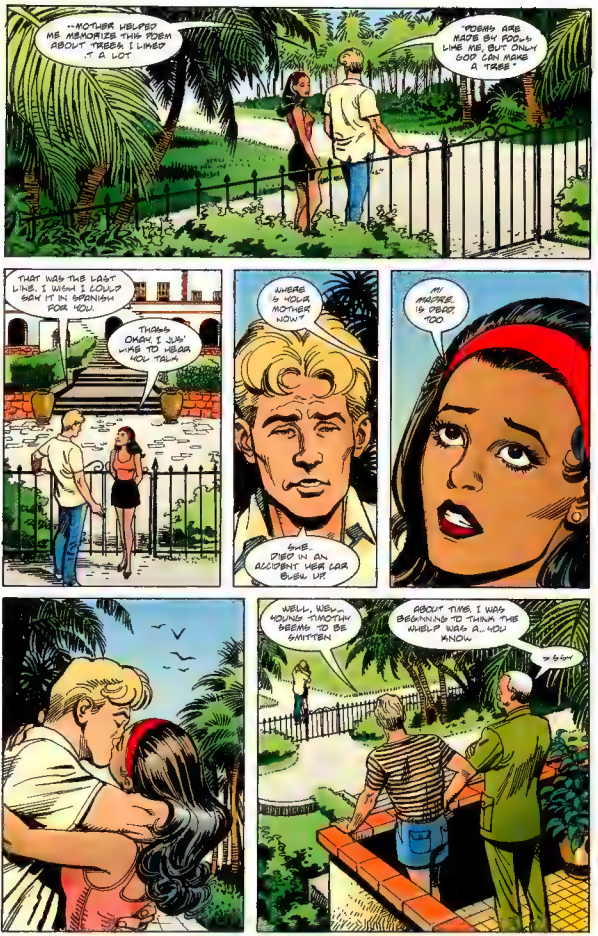

To listen and say nothing.
ten dams only ten dams only ten


Weighing.

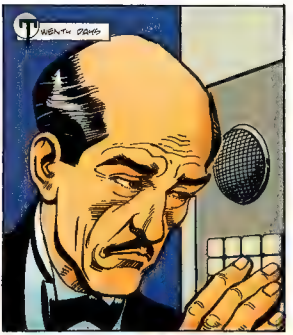
A hundred pounds and he can't lift it
That will change by tomorrow
Should give him the pill?


Oh, something better than pills. Much better.

Fifteen dams


"...MOTHER HELPED ME MEMORIZE THIS POEM ABOUT TREES. I LIKED IT A LOT.
"POEMS ARE MADE BY FOOLS LIKE ME, BUT ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A TREE."
THAT WAS THE LAST LINE. I WISH I COULD SAY IT IN SPANISH FOR YOU.
THANKS. OKAY, I JUST WANT TO HEAR YOU TALK.
WHERE IS YOUR MOTHER NOW?
SHE DIED IN AN ACCIDENT WHEN OUR CAR BLEW UP.
MI MADRE, SI. DEAD TOO.
WELL, WELL... SOUND TIMOTHY SEEMS TO BE SMITTEN
ABOUT TIME. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THE WHELP WAS A... YOU KNOW.

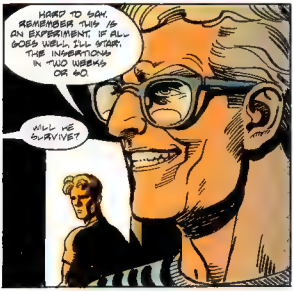
I ONLY HOPE SHE DOESN'T GIVE HIM A DISEASE. YOU KNOW HOW THESE PEOPLE ARE
FILTHY
FILTHY OR NOT, I THINK THE YOUNG WOMAN MAY BE VERY USEFUL TO US.


TWENTY DAYS

MUCH BETTER.

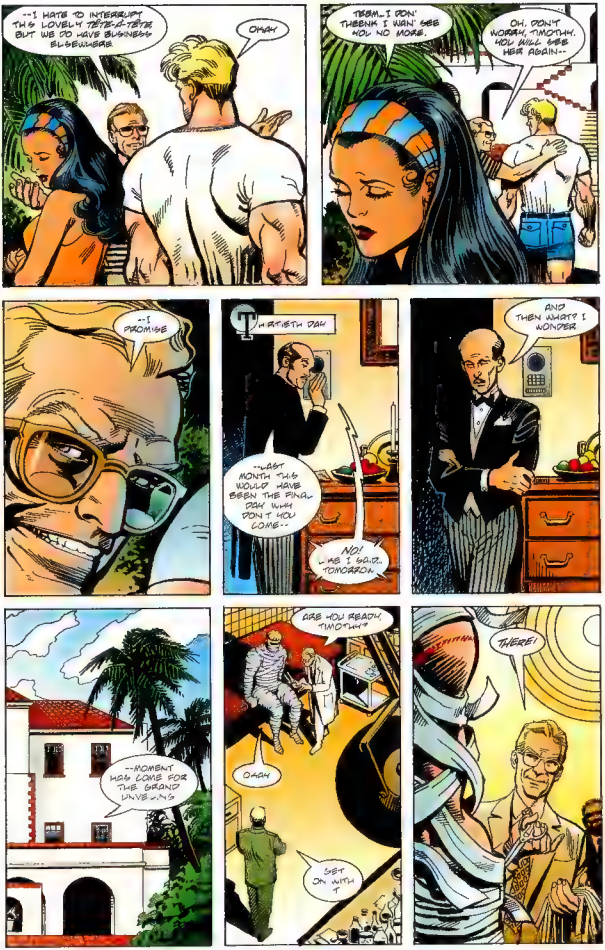
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS.
EVE IMPROVED THE DRUG, AND PUTTING IT STRAIGHT INTO HIS VEINS HELPS.
WHEN WILL WE BEGIN THE OTHER PART OF HIS TRAINING...

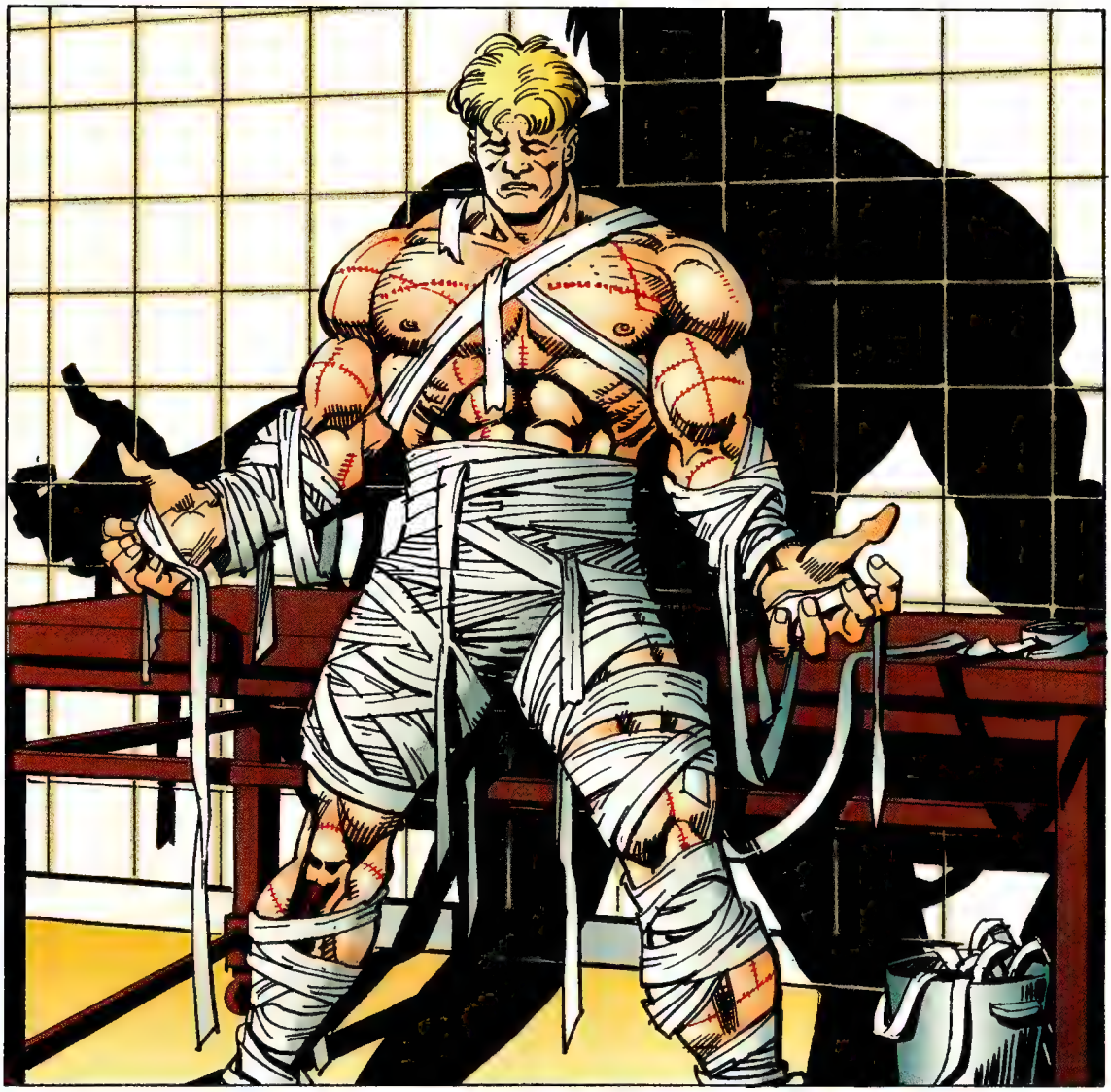
...THE SURGERY?

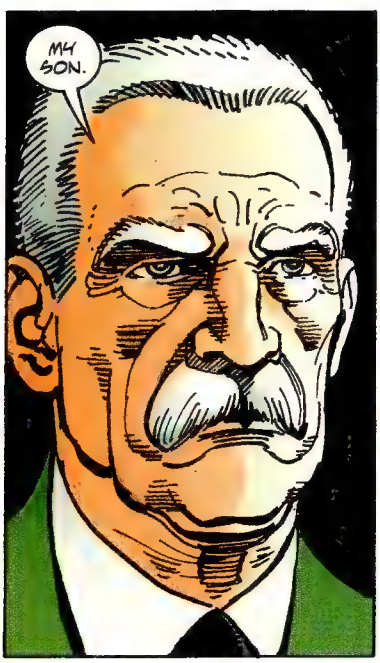

HARD TO SAY. REMEMBER THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT. IF ALL GOES WELL, LIL STAR, THE INSERTIONS IN TWO WEEKS OR SO.
WILL WE SURVIVE?

DOES IT MATTER?

TWENTY-FIFTH DAH
--BEEN MORE THAN THREE WEEKS..
I SAID A MONTH
THE VOICE FROM THE SPEAKER IS HOARSE AND FULL OF ANGUISH
WHAT HE MUST BE SUFFERING...
--PLEASE, TEEN.
DON'T BE SO ROUGH
I AIN'T, AH'MEAN, AH CAN BE AHH WAH I WANNA BE
WHY DON' YOU TELL ME THE POEM, THE ONE ABOUT THE TREES?
I..I FORGOT IT.
'CAUSE IT'S STUPID!
NO!
C'MERE...
HOLING TIMOTHY...

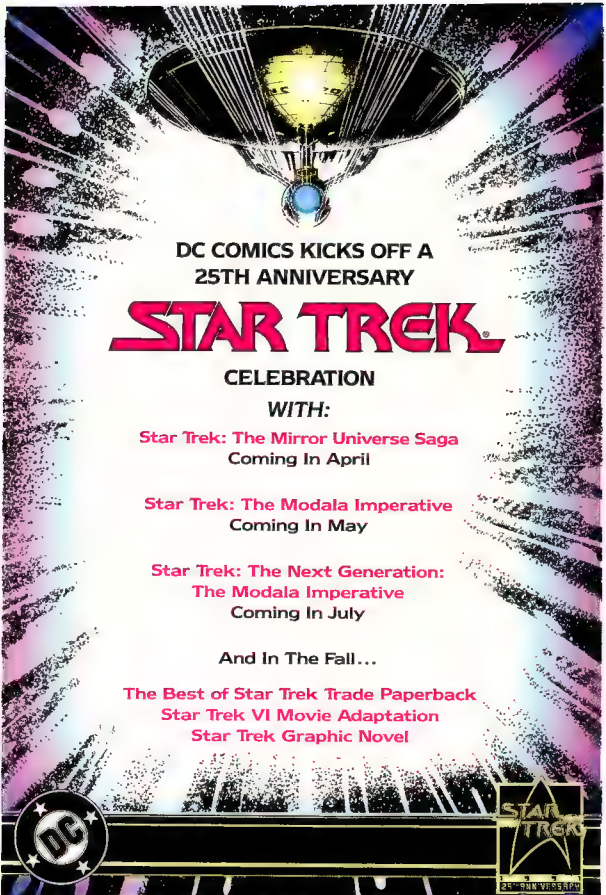

--I HATE TO INTERRUPT THIS LOVELY TETE-A-TETE BUT WE DO HAVE BUSINESS ELSEWHERE.
OHAH
YEAH...I DON' THEENK I WAN' SEE YOU NO MORE.
OH, DON'T WORRY, TIMOTHY. YOU WILL SEE HER AGAIN--
--I PROMISE
THIRTEETH DAH
--LAST MONTH THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FINAL DAH WAH DON'T YOU COME--
NO! --AS I SAID, TOMORROH
AND THEN WHAT? I WONDER
--MOMENT HAS COME FOR THE GRAND UNVEILING
DAS YOU READY, TIMOTHY?
OHAH
SET 'EM WITH 'T
THERE!




MY SON.

THAT'S ENOUGH, GENERAL.
GOOD. VERY GOOD! THE BULLETS BROKE THE SKIN--WE EXPECTED THAT--BUT THE SUBCUTANEOUS MEATS ARE BARELY DENTED!
HOW DO YOU FEEL, TIMOTHY? ANY PAIN?
NO
AND YOU'LL NEVER FEEL PAIN AGAIN. THE ALTERATIONS TO YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM MAKE PAIN AN IMPOSSIBILITY.
YOU'RE A LUCKY BOY, TIMOTHY. NO. A LUCKY MAN. NO, THAT'S NOT QUITE RIGHT EITHER. YOU'RE A LUCKY--
--SUPER MAN!

IT IS TIME.
HE MOVES, THE HANDS TO MARK THE MINUTE BRUCE WAYNE'S PARENTS FELL TO A KILLER'S GUN, SO MANY YEARS AGO.
MASTER BRUCE--
--BATMAN!
OH, MY.



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LET ME HELP--
NO, NO I'M ALL RIGHT

ARE YOU REALLY?

YEAH, I AM THANKS

REMARKABLE WEIGHT LOSS. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED WRITING A DIET BOOK?
I'M NOT SURE I REMEMBER HOW TO SPELL.
IN THAT CASE, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER TELEVISION

MAY I SUGGEST YOU INDULGE YOURSELF TONIGHT IN AN EXCELLENT VENISON STEAK WITH NEW POTATOES AND...
NOT JUST ME. I WANT TO TAKE A SHOWER FIRST - ONE ONE THEN SOME TOAST AND HOT TEA

AND THEN, I THINK I'LL GO SIT OUTSIDE IN THE SUN.

LET ME GO!

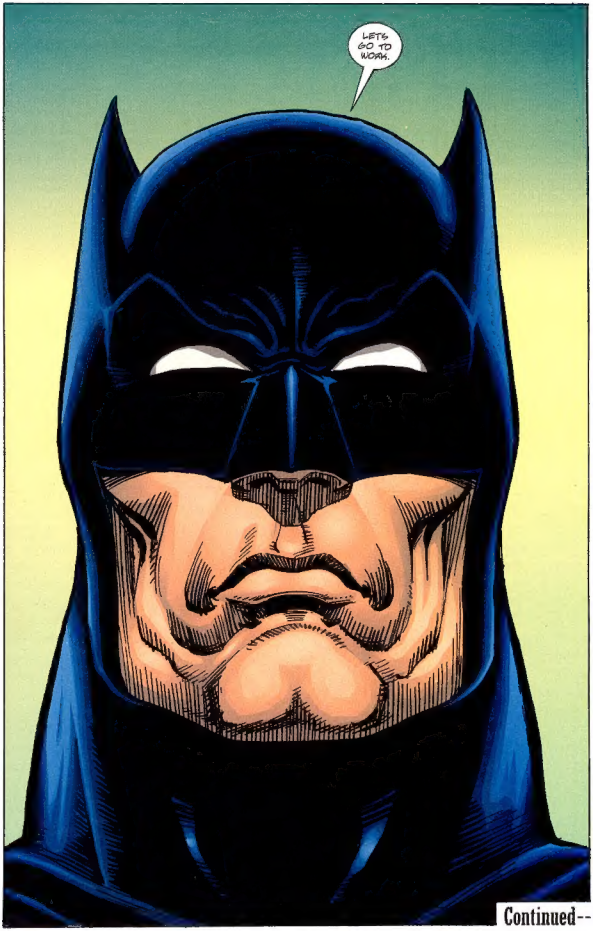
I DON'T WANNA BE WITH YOU!

TELL ME, GENERAL, DON'T SOLDIERS HAVE CERTAIN PREROGATIVES CONCERNING THE WOMEN THEY ENCOUNTER? SOMETHING ABOUT MENTAL ARMS HAVING NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET?
AND DON'T WE CONSIDER YOUNG THE "TROOPER"
AND, OH YES, ISN'T THERE A PENALTY FOR THE WOMEN WHO DO NOT MEET THE MILITARY NEEDS?

YES?
MY WIFE, YES

DON'...
...TELL ME THE POEM ABOUT THE TREES--
-gkkkk-
SERVES HER RIGHT
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO STAND OFFISH
CARRY ON
WHAT DO YOU THINK, GENERAL?
WELL DONE.
IF WE CAN MAKE THAT WEAKLING A MAN, WE CAN DO IT TO ANYONE

--BEGINNING TO FILL OUT THE COSTUME AGAIN, MASTER BRUCE.
YES, CONVALESCENCE IS OVER.
A CAUSE FOR LAMENTATION AMONG GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD?
THEY DON'T HAVE TO WORRY JUST YET. I'M LEAVING THE CITY.
EH?
I'M GOING AFTER PORTER AND SLAYCROFT.
MAY I ASK WHY? SURELY THEY NO LONGER POSE A THREAT--
BUT THEY DO. THEY WILL AS LONG AS THEY'RE FREE. BECAUSE I CAN'T FORGET WHAT HAPPENED TO ME WHILE I WAS IN THE CAVE...
...WHAT I BECAME... AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO REST UNTIL I KNOW THEY CAN'T DO THAT TO ME AGAIN.



Continued--

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Dear Andy,
Re: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #12
I have rarely seen an issue of a title as excellent in *every* respect as this one!
The writing was superb, and there was not *one single page* that could not have hung proudly in a gallery of graphic art! I sincerely hope that all involved with this issue will be teaming again for another, and I don't care if it's a title I don't read—I'll buy it!
Kudos to everyone for not just a fine job, but for an outstanding five-parter. I expect the remaining segments to be just as well executed as the first ones have been.

Jon Aiken
Atlanta, GA

P.S. I've really enjoyed your scripting on "The Adventures of Superboy." At last, a writer who understands the characters and the medium.

Andrew Helfer and Michael Carlin have written several episodes of the successful syndicated show.

* * * * *

Dear Legends,
Kevin Dooley was right. "Prey" is the most unforgettable Batman story since YEAR ONE. The ambiance of the series are similar, and the transition between the two is so smooth that "Prey" feels like it's a part of YEAR ONE. The development of Batman's niche in the fabric of Gotham City, and the intense characterizations of the friends and foes that will forever be a part of Batman's life is sublime. I've never read any of Doug Moench's work until now, but his story is evenly paced and highly entertaining. I think "Prey" will be eternally etched in the Batman mythos.
Obviously, Mr. Moench is not the only factor that makes this storyline great. Paul Gulacy is well suited to draw "Prey." His artwork is great, but what's even better is the point of origin he wishes to draw from: it sometimes seems like the reader is actually looking into a real-life scene. Steve Oliff backs up the detailed images with a wide spectrum of colors; he's certainly one of the best colorists in the business. Talent like this puts LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT at the forefront of comics today.
You've got a classic in the making here; keep up the excellent work. Thanks to everyone involved.

Henry Kong
Burnaby, B.C., Canada

Tom Salinsky, Middlesex, England, calls Steve's coloring "magnificent," but we can fit just so many names on the cover. We hope Steve and crew know how much we appreciate and honor their work. He is, indeed, a color artist.

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Dear Editor,
I've enjoyed DC's various Batman titles off and on since about 1960, and was especially pleased with LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #11. The terrific Gulacy cover was what caught my attention, and the story art certainly lived up to my high expectations.
I have one point of correction to make, however. On page 9 Dr. Strange diagnoses Batman as suffering from schizophrenia and a "split personality." As a psychotherapist who deals with a variety of disorders, I can say with a fair degree of certainty that no clinician would make such a diagnosis based on so little information and without ever having interviewed the individual in question. (Of course, I realize that Strange is, himself, missing a few essential marbles.) Also, the term "split personality" is not a clinical term at all, and not even a quack like Strange would be likely to use it, as to do so would be very damaging to his reputation in the psychiatric community. If he felt compelled to make such a diagnosis, he would call it a "multiple personality disorder," or MPD for short.
Anyhow, thanks for a great issue! You can count on my continued readership!

Henry J. Vester III
Klamath Falls, OR

"Missing a few essential marbles"? Though correct, as Strange was a bit lacking, do you often "make such a diagnosis based on so little information and without ever having interviewed the individual in question"? You set yourself up, Henry. Strange had studied Batman for months. The expression "split personality" can be his keeping things simple for the TV audience, for the sake of his ego. The host indicated there was "hardly proof" of what Strange said, which Strange regarded as an attack and so attacked back. Considering what eventually transpired, "missing a few essential marbles" is an understatement. Thanks, though.

* * * * *

Dear Bat-Men,
This is my first letter to an American comic book. I'm writing to let you know how much I enjoyed LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #11 and #12.
For me Batman has always meant adventures filled with magic and excitement, and this long-awaited masterpiece didn't let me down. But what else could you expect from my favorite creative team of Moench/Gulacy but stunning art and promising story?
Gulacy, as always, is doing a great job. His pencils are among the best in comics today. Then again, it's hard to fail when Terry Austin is the inker. Doug always stands for solid storytelling, and I admire him a lot.
You folks certainly have a classic here.

Fan Bentzen
Hammershusvef, Denmark

We can't reveal details on creative teams too far ahead until contracts are signed. We can tell you an Archie Goodwin, Marshall Rogers, Terry Austin five-parter is after the next segment, which features Mike W. Barr, Bart Sears, and Randy Elliott. How's that?

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NOTES: We love it when one letter answers another. Tim Durbin (Indianapolis, IN) asks, "Which stories take place in regular continuity and which do not?" The reply comes from Greg Hardy (Largo, FL), "directed at those who complain about the occasional continuity breaches in this title: Legends themselves are strange stories that are dreamed up and told on a whim to entertain anyone who cares to hear them for a long, long time. So take the stories told in BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT exactly as they are...just stories."
Doug Hackeray of Alberta, Canada, wants to know what other work Paul Gulacy has done. For DC he did SLASH MARAUD, DETECTIVE #393 and 394, MASTER OF KUNG FU, SIX FROM SIRIUS, and lots more.

COVER CREDITS: José Luis García-Lopéz. Color by Steve Oliff.

NEXT ISSUE: He was at his height—of strength, of power, of obsession. Now, he is weak, drained. What can he possibly do if he's placed in a death trap? Sometimes temptation is the greatest challenge. "Venom" Part Four by Denny O'Neil, Trevor Von Eeden, Russell Braun, and José Luis García-Lopéz.

—Kevin Dooley

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